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ABSTRACT

This report describes the establishment and operation of a Canadian secondary-school house and governance system designed to (1) encourage student involvement at all school function levels, (2) provide increased personal advice to students, and (3) satisfy some of the students' needs to be involved in decisions affecting their education. The Constitution of the school council is provided as an 8-page attachment. (JF)

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ROLAND MICHENER SECONDARY SCHOOL

HOUSE SYSTEM

In the school year 1968-69 preparations were being made for a number of changes:-

a) adoption of individual timetabling
b) further involvement in the implications of credit system
c) changes in curriculum and pedagogy that would match our aim of a student-orientated school atmosphere
d) the liberalizing of school regime to keep step with other changes

Moreover, the educational world generally was getting nervous about the impersonal, computer-dominated school, the large school where the scale on which relationships had to be made was too large for human comfort. Against this background, staff and students were asked to be ready to make suggestions.

Eventually, a committee of screened volunteers was set up and provided with very general terms of reference and charged with the responsibility of producing, ready for operation in September, 1969, an acceptable social structure for the school that would achieve some, at least, of the following goals:-

a) encourage student involvement at all levels of the school's function.

b) provide an administrative structure that would be personal, capable of providing the increased individual advice that would be needed when students would be making very important decisions for themselves.

c) satisfy, within the bounds of reason and control, the modern student's need to be involved in the decisions that affected his education, his daily life and his future. The accent here was to be on informed responsibility.

d) provide an alternative atmosphere for relationship-making that had been so well done in good schools by the home room unit which would disappear in the circumstances of individual timetables and credit system operation.

The screening of the committee was felt to be necessary if it was to be an informed, well-motivated and dynamic group. Over-screening and absence of volunteer or elective elements, would, it was believed, ruin the project.

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So the screening was positive rather than negative. i.e. concentration was on the INCLUSION of likely people rather than on EXCLUSION of unlikely contributors.

The committee, composed of equal numbers of staff and students and under the chairmanship of a staff member, met on a regular basis throughout the year and came up with the attached structure and basic constitution (page 3).

Invitations were put out to the staff to fill the positions of Housemasters. Interviews with the Principal were arranged and eventually he made his appointments. The staff were allocated to Houses partly on the basis of positions to be filled in the Houses, i.e. each House had its Guidance teacher, its Physical Education representative, etc. Each Housemaster chose his own assistant but was given the advice that, wherever possible, a male Housemaster appoint a female Assistant. All necessary elections were carried out towards the end of summer term, 1969. The constitution was written up. Explanations of the System were given to staff and students and all was ready for operation in September, 1969. The feeder public schools were also included in this programme of information so that all students would begin the year familiar with the general nature, at least, of the House System.

Things moved rather slowly in September, 1969. Students did not seem to warm to the system and staff found it a little strange. The Housemasters were not always fully aware of their precise roles. After some weeks of operation it was also found that the original structure threatened to "meeting people to death". Measures taken were as follows:-

a) a series of meetings took place between Principal, Vice-Principal and Housemasters in which the areas of responsibility of the Housemaster were more precisely worked out.

b) after this phase a series of House meetings and school council meetings were held to streamline the organization so that meetings would be fewer and communications improved.

Attached is a diagram of the revised House scheme. (page 4)

After this phase, some improvement was noted in the total function of the House System in the following ways:-

a) some very worthwhile activities were being sponsored by the Houses

b) Housemasters were more and more fulfilling their roles, largely by being more and more involved in the day-to-day issues of school life.

c) some students, still, however, a minority, were seeing the possibilities of the House System as a way of making a worthwhile contribution to

I. DESCRIPTION

Students plus House Master, Assistant House Master, Guidance Adviser, Phys. Ed. Adviser. All teachers assigned in equal numbers to Houses.

II. CLASS COUNCIL

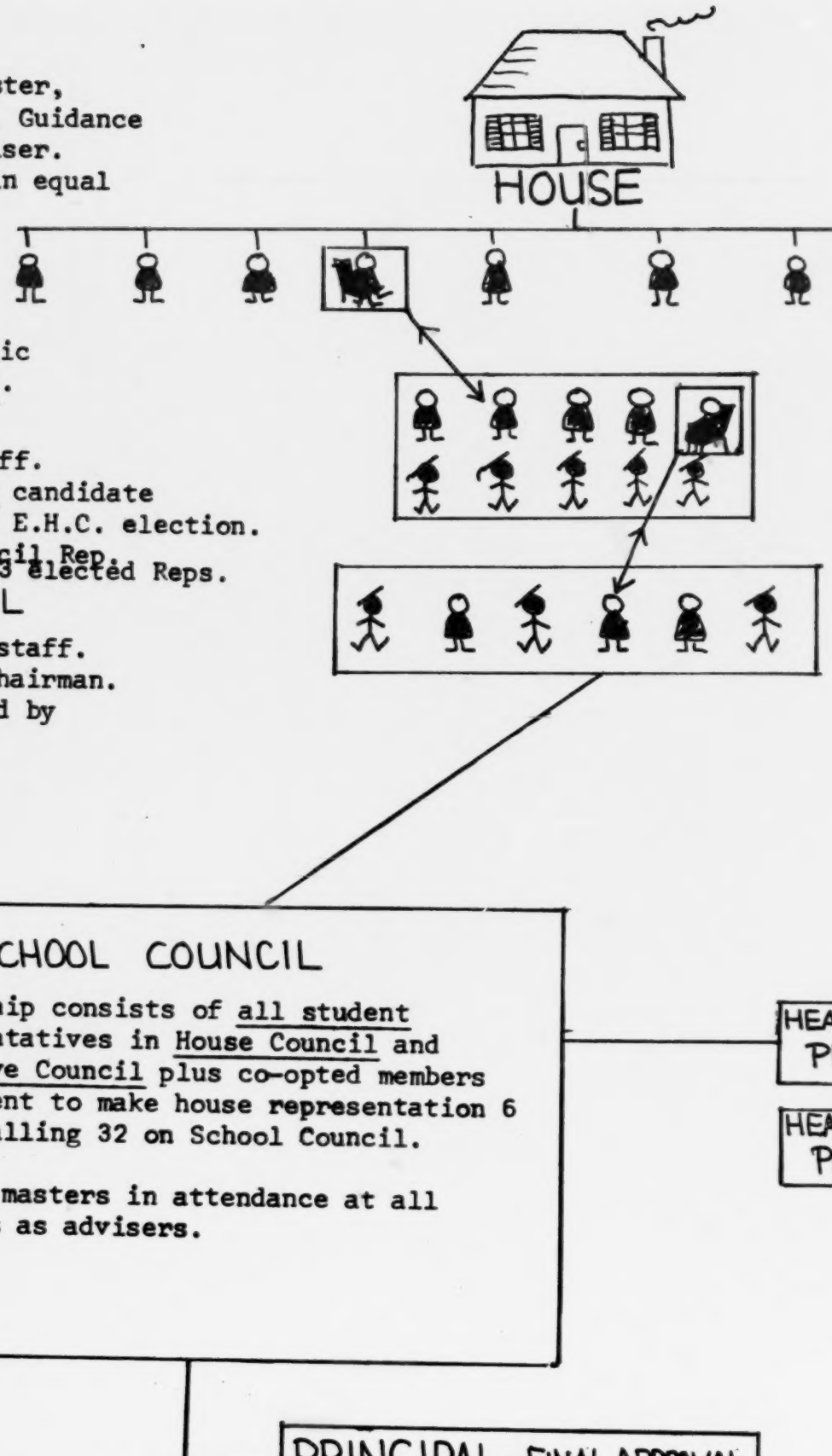
Ten members elected by class. Chairman elected becomes automatic member of House Council.

III. HOUSE COUNCIL

Five (5) students 5 staff.
Student chairman may be candidate receiving most votes in E.H.C. election.
i.e. 1 Executive House Council Rep.
1 Class Council Rep. 3 elected Reps.

IV. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Three (3) students - 3 staff.
House master over all chairman.
Student chairman elected by colleagues.


HOUSE
SCHOOL COUNCIL
Membership consists of all student representatives in House Council and Executive Council plus co-opted members sufficient to make house representation 6 and totalling 32 on School Council.
2 House masters in attendance at all meetings as advisers.
SEC.
From outside School Council
TREAS.
HEAD MALE PREFECT
HEAD FEMALE PREFECT
PRINCIPAL - FINAL APPROVAL

QUALIFICATIONS

I. Student population divided into equal house allotment. Approximately 250 members (maximum)

II. No qualifications necessary. Candidates are to be approved by House Council. 2/3 majority necessary in Executive Council to disallow nominee from running.

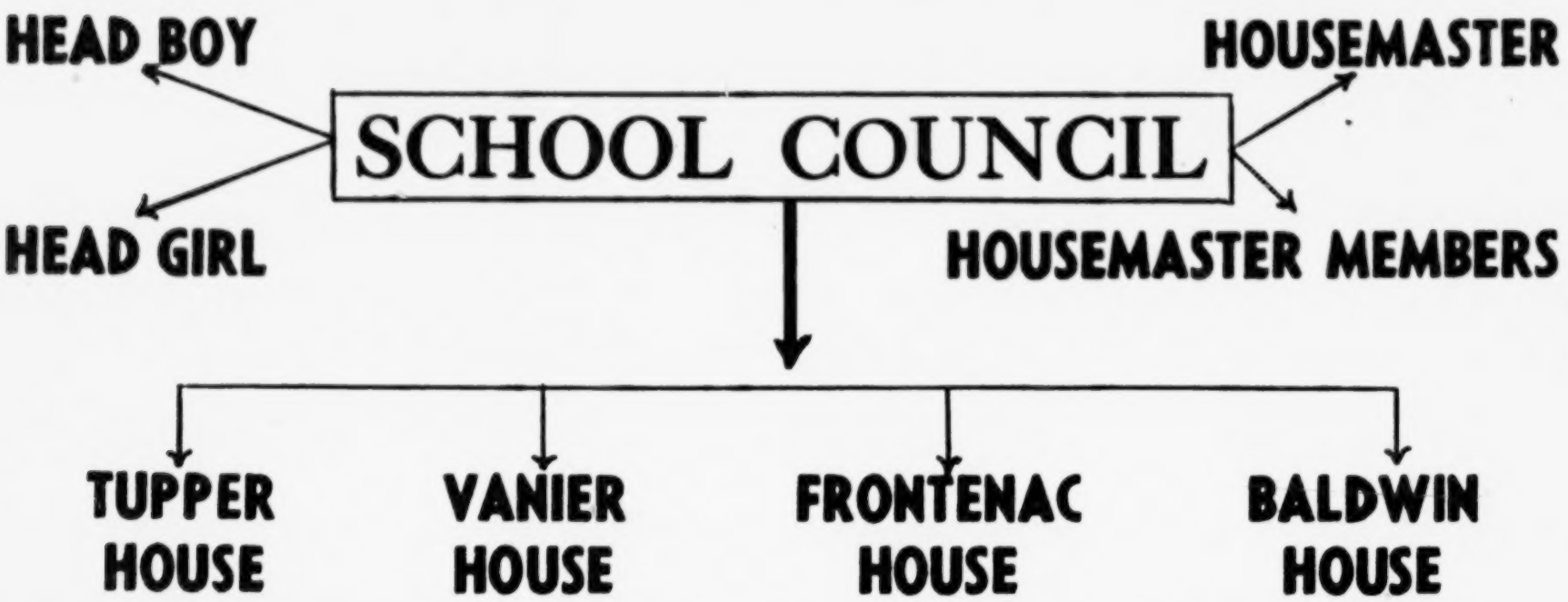
III. Minimum qualifications - 1 year at R.M.S.S.
Limited to 10 nominees - limit settled by a vote amongst nominees if there are over 10.

IV. Must have successful Class Council experience or have contributed to other school organizations or served as a co-optee.
Must be from 11th, 12th, or 13th year.
Nominated in the same manner as House Council. Approved by 3/5 approval of House Masters and Principal.

Elected by School Council members.

Co-chairmen of School Council. Term of office to be decided under constitution.

Organization of House System



SCHOOL COUNCIL CONSISTS OF 14 MEMBERS (with provisions to co-opt a Social Convenor)

- TWO MEMBERS FROM EACH HOUSE (CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN)
- TWO SPORTS CONVENORS - 1 BOY, 1 GIRL (COUCHICHING REPRESENTATIVES)
- TREASURER
- SECRETARY
- HEAD BOY AND HEAD GIRL

their school and getting for themselves valuable training in responsible and non-dictational leadership.

There were still some problems. The home room unit was not functioning well and since this unit is at the heart of the system, this was serious. The House Assembly was not working too well. It was either too dull or too trivial. It seemed very difficult to strike a balance here. Two steps were taken to remedy this situation:-

a) an enquiry was set afoot to discover whether or not the heterogenous make-up of the home room units was the cause of the trouble.

b) steps were taken to try and get home room teachers more informed and involved.

c) measures were taken to reduce the number of House Assemblies and make them more meaningful by a previously published agenda, etc.

Some slight improvement was noted after these measures but it would be fair to say that we still do not really know how wise the home room set up is and that home room teachers vary greatly in the amount of involvement they can achieve.

The structure of the House System seemed to suggest the need of a head Housemaster, to co-ordinate all House matters. The filling of these positions set a considerable strain on the school timetabling arrangements because the people concerned all held other positions, some of them demanding in themselves. When, at the end of the 1970 school year, the Head Housemaster left, replacing him was impossible because none of these positions are established or salaried. This situation is likely to be repeated because the kind of replacement necessary can rarely afford to forego the reward for responsibility that he or she will undoubtedly already have.

The system for the 1970-71 year is substantially the same except for certain improvements in physical arrangements. The most significant of these is probably the scheduling of school council meetings in the actual timetable, lending force to the argument that the House System is part of the structure of the school.

OBSERVATIONS:- Pro

A recent social survey of the school carried out by McArthur College showed our students to be much more content with their lot than is usual. We think the House System has contributed to this. The same survey shows an extraordinarily good relationship between staff and administration. The

House System has done its part towards this result too. The school has just moved into a flex mod timetabling situation with amazing smoothness. We feel that the House System has contributed to this.

Following is a list of activities and events sponsored by the Houses:-

Sausage making
Coffee Houses
Bake Sales
Lecture Programmes
Film Society
Mediterranean Irishmen's Night - Spaghetti Supper
School Sweaters
Pizza Parties
Tuck Shop
Vanier Night
Fashion Show
Save-a-Child Campaign
Slave Day
Blood Donor Clinics
Winter Carnival

OBSERVATIONS:- Contra

1. The home room function is still not satisfactory.
2. There is a separatist tendency.
3. The students still require a lot of urging to participate in activities.
4. There still exists a problem area in the decision as to the orientation towards social activities, academic activities or combinations of these.

Role of the Housemaster:-

The Housemaster acts as a "go-between" for the student, Vice-Principal, Principal and the Guidance Counsellor. He is involved with discipline, personal interviews, social, academic and sports activities and as well, is a member of the School Council. In general, the Housemaster is an "ombudsman", a ways and means person, a resource person; helpful but not at all a governmental type.

Role of the Home Room Teacher:-

The home room teacher is instrumental in the transfer of information from all areas of the school and becomes involved with students and their day-to-day problems.

ROLAND MICHENER SECONDARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL COUNCIL

CONSTITUTION

Name of Organization:

This organization shall be known as the School Council of Roland Michener Secondary School.

Object:

Shall be to provide for the student-body and school an effective system of student government and representation, subject to constitution.

STRUCTURE:

The House System of Roland Michener Secondary School. The school is divided into four houses:

Baldwin
Frontenac
Tupper
Vanier

Government:

Each house has one housemaster
one assistant housemaster
Students: one boy or girl chairman
one boy or girl vice chairman
one boy and girl sports convenors
one social convenor
one awards convenor
one financial convenor
one secretary
a junior and senior class reps. from each classroom

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HEAD HOUSEMASTER:

-keep the operation of the house moving
-assistant Housemaster is to help Housemaster and take charge in of absence of Housemaster
-either one or the other must attend House Meetings and they have the right to vote
-act as disciplinarian and Guidance officer for students in the house.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CON'D:

-approve acf all House Activities
-act as an ombudsman
-reccomended to Council for the removal of any officer not fulfilling responsibilities

DUTIES OF CO-CHAIRMAN:

-responsible for all house affairs and will also form part of the School Council
-keep the housemaster and students informed of all the activities that go on in the house
-must chair all house meetings and call any special meetings necessary through Housemaster
-conduct voting in Council
-assign special duties to other convenors of the house and make sure they are carried out
-put House Council as prime concern
-should not be too involved in other organizations
-in case of a tie the one who is not chairing the meeting may vote
-to lead student body in house with spirit and responsibility
-bring any minutes or points of discussion from house meetings to school meetings
-inform students to resign when they have missed two meetings without a good excuse

DUTIES OF SECRETARY:

-keep all minutes of the House Meetings so chairman can bring them up to the School Council Meetings
-have minutes of each house meeting written up so they can be read at the following meeting
-prepare minutes for all the class reps
-should be co-opted from the house
-keep attendance of all meetings
-should not have the right to vote
-inform chairman if a student has missed two consecutive meetings

DUTIES OF FINANCIAL CONVENOR:

-keep financial records of all fund raising activities in the house
-keep ledger of all money coming in and out of the house
-give financial reports at all meetings
-look after money from House dances the night of the dance
-can vote

FINANCIAL CONVENOR CONT'D:

-financial report must be submitted to the School Council Treasurer the school day following the event

DUTIES OF SPORTS CONVENOR:

-promote spirit in hous e with sports
-help Couch Reps.
-help run unstructured time in gym

DUTIES OF SOCIAL CONVENOR:

-promote public relations in and out of the school
-look after any social activities in the house, can put people in charge to do this
-chairman of Dance Committee (one of four social convenors) is in charger of all dances in the school
-four convenors form a Dance Committee
-can vote

DUTIES OF CHAIRMAN OF SOCIAL CONVENOR:

-in charge of contacting bands
-make sure everything is done in preparation for the dance. This is done by the group putting on the dance not the convenor
-can vote

DUTIES OF AWARDS CONVENOR:

-responsible for compiling all the points for each student in the house
-in charge of keeping records up to date on House Bulletin Boards
-have running total of all House Points
-no qualifications required for class reps

QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS:

-must be responsibile, mature and possess school spirit
-must have okay of Housemasters
-must have at least one year in Roland Michener Secondary School
-can vote

SCHOOL COUNCIL:

-one Head Boy and Girl
-Couch Reps.

SCHOOL COUNCIL CONT'D:

-chairman and vice-chairman from each house
-secretary
-treasurer -Jr. and Sr. (non-voting)
-chairman of Social Convenors

DUTIES OF SCHOOL COUNCIL:

-final say of all student activities subject to approval of Housemaster
-responsible for all school students
-on major student projects a weekly progress report is to be submitted to Headmaster each week

DUTIES OF TREASURER:

-Sr. Treasurer paid position $100.00- Jr. Treasurer $25.00
-budget must be presented to the School Council at the beginning of the year to run to December and another to run from January to June
-this includes Houses
-financial statement presented to Council and Principal once a week

DUTIES OF SECRETARY:

-paid position $50.00
-keep minutes of all meetings recorder in a proper book designated for that purpose
-to be in charge of all documents pertaining to the Council
-carry on correspondence of Council
-to take attendance at every meeting and inform a chairman of any member who has missed two meetings without an excuse
-type out any documents and notes pertaining to the Council
-member must be excused by Housemaster and checked with secretary

HEAD BOY AND GIRL POSITION:

-nominated by students at large
-approved by Housemasters, School Council, Vice-Principal, And Principal

QUALIFICATIONS:

-candidates must be in graduating year
-candidates must have previous executive council experience or the equivalent
-candidates must have an out-going personality and be community minded
-candidates must have a nominator and a seconder from the school at large

DUTIES OF HEAD BOY AND GIRL:

-chair school council meetings
-chair school assemblies
-head Prefect Organization
-represent the school on any occassion when necessary
-Honourary members of School Council for the rest of the year providing they leave in good faith

DUTIES OF COUCH REPS:

-in charge of sports council
-to attend all school council meetings
-responsible for holding Saturday Clinics for grade eights
-in charge of Athletic Banquet
-to work with intramural co-ordinator(Housemaster)

SPORTS COUNCIL:

-made up of Sports Convenors from Houses
-two Couch Reps, and volunteers from the Houses
-carry out orders from Couch Reps
-help with intramurals and clinics

PROCEDURE--LEGISLATIVE:

-all business discussed must be included in the agenda
-any person making a report will request the Council to adopt the report as read, then it will be discussed and sent down to the House Council then back to the School Council and voted on
-RESOLUTIONS: A person making a motion will read the motion, give any necessary explanation and move that the motion be adopted
-once an agenda has been drawn up it must be adhered to. Only the chaiman may make alternations during a meeting if something special arises.
-members desiring to speak must raise their hand. If there is more than one member doing this at the same time, the Head Boy or Girl must decide who is to speak first
-no member when speaking shall be interruped by another member
-the chairman has the deciding vote in the case of an equality of votes

PROCEDURE---JUDICIAL:

ATTENDANCE AT COUNCIL MEETINGS:

-a student rep will be expelled from the Council after he/she has missed two consecutive meetings without replacements.
-the rep may be excused through the Housemaster
-the attendance of an alternate is the responsibility of the class rep.
-if a member of the School or House Council is constantly neglecting his duties he/she must explain his/her conduct to the chairman of the Council involved and the matter will be discussed. (See Duties of Housemasters)

COUNCIL MEETINGS:

DANCE COMMITTEE:

-purpose-to decide upon the date for dances. Clear through office.
-hire bands
-to provide security
-to inform sponsoring organizations of their duties
-contract--expand

DANCE DUTIES:

-it is the duty of the sponsoring organization
-to publicize the dance with posters, announcements, etc.
-to have a list of work committees submitted to the Council at least three days before the dance.
-to set up a smoking room and get ash trays out
-to secure doors leading to out of bounds area
-financial report to be submitted in triplicate to school treasurer on following school day.

-must be two prefects on doors at beginning of the dance and one at the end of the dance and one at all other times
-teacher in charge must deposit money in bank

COURTYARD COMMITTEE:

-see to the maintance of courtyard when in operation

AMENDMENT PROCEDURE:

-a quor--shall be 8 minutes
-a paragraph or clause shall be added to the constitution when any changes, corrections or additions must be made
-a lengthy discussion and voting shall proceed the amendment's acceptance as part of the constitution

AMENDMENT PROCEDURE CONT'D:

-a vote of 2/3 majority of those present is sufficient for the addition of an amendment
-the Secretary shall add the accepted amendment to the constitution

CHARTERS AND VETO:

-The Council can veto any charter brought forth from any group of students who wish to form an organization or club.
-it is up to the Council to discuss any charter thoroughly before it is accepted or rejected. A reason for rejection shall be given to the person(s) presenting the charter
-any organization must be chartered by the School Council before it can legally operate within the school
-the Council can also veto any other social student activity run by a student organization. Subject to veto are dances, plays or other special projects.
-any organization wanting financial assistance from the Council shall present their reasons and the amount of money required to the Council at a meeting. If the Council does not find the cause worthy, they shall veto the request.

ELECTIONS:

-shall be held on day suitable to timetable for both School Council and House Council
-results will be announced the following day. The new executive will take office the following week. Junior and Senior Reps. remain until new reps. elected in September
-CAMPAIGN: all posters shall be kept in good taste as well as various other gimmicks.
-all campaign material must be removed prior to 4:00 p.m. on the day before the elections.
-ELECTION DAY: every student and teacher has the right to vote
-students will volentarily vote at their assigned voting polls
-the polls shall be open all day long
-votes will be counted by former executives unless that person is running again
-it is up to the new officers if they want to make an acceptance speech at the next assembly
-School Council choses Head Boy and Girl along with Housemasters, Vice-Principal, and Principal
-the new School Council Executive will consult the existing executive in order to understand the workings of the Council
-the old Head Boy and Girl will become Honourary members of the School Council for the last part of the year

ELECTIONS CONT'D:

- in case of only one candidate running for an office he/she wins by acclamation.

PIECE OF INFORMATION:

SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES:

- Roland Michener Bursary: In honour of the Governor General shall be presented to the students who achieve the highest marks in each course every year. The value of this Bursary is $400.00 to be split in four ways.

Signed: _____

_____

DATE: _____ Housemaster: _____